

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated July 7, 2003, claim 1 is amended. Claims 1-18 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

The indication that claims 7-18 are allowable, and that claim 6 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims is acknowledged and appreciated.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102 AND § 103

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(1) as being unpatentable over Omizu et al. (USPN 5,832,149 to) in view of Burack et al. (USPN 5,582,673), relied upon to disclose a protective resin layer bonded to a flat member or base, which is pressed against optical fibers for supporting each optical fiber in its assigned position, and in further view of Ryuzo et al. (USPN 4,546,018), relied upon to disclose a silicone base resin curable through a reaction with the liberation of alcohol or oxime.

On page 5, last paragraph of the present office action, the Examiner advises that “if Applicant(s) amended claim 1 by replacing “held in place” with “embedded in their entirety”, the application would be in condition for allowance.

To expedite prosecution, claim 1 is amended to delineate:

...at least one protective resin layer by which said optical fibers are held in place in a form embedded therein...

This expression is similar to the expression used in USPN 6,567,603, issued May 20, 2003 and having the same assignee as the present application. Applicants believe that the above proposed expression has the same meaning as the expression suggested by the

Examiner, by without the unduly limiting expression “in their entirety”. Applicants believe that the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 1 would not be protected if required to recite “in their entirety”, as the optical fibers 4 are clearly not *entirely* embedded in protective resin layer 2. More specifically, portions of optical fibers 4 are clearly depicted (in FIG. 1) as extending outside protective resin layer 2. Consequently, there is **NOT** at least one protective resin layer by which said optical fibers are *embedded in their entirety*.

However, neither Burack et al., Omizu et al., nor Ryuzo et al. disclose that plural optical fibers routed in a two-dimensional plane are held in place in a form embedded in a protective resin layer. Thus, amended independent claim 1, as well as dependent claims 2-6, are patentable over Burack et al., Omizu et al. and Ryuzo et al. considered alone or in combination. Consequently, the allowance of claims 1-6, as amended, is respectfully solicited.

CONCLUSION

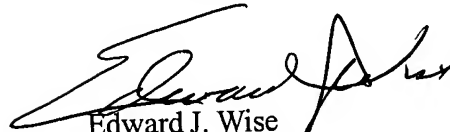
Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, overcomes the rejection of record and is in condition for allowance. Entry of the amendment and favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended, are respectfully requested. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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